

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Claims 4 and 9 are currently being amended. New claim 13 is currently being added.

This amendment changes claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 3-5 and 8-12 are now pending in this application.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 11 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, the Examiner asserts that it is unclear how the claims 11 and 12 further limit the structure of the sheet feeder set forth in independent claims 4 and 9.

In response, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 11 and 12 limit the structure of independent claims 4 and 9. The limitations of claims 11 and 12 require the structure of the sheet guide be configured to control a special sheet that is a post card. As claimed, the sheet guide has special sheet ribs to control both sides of the special sheet. It follows that dependent claims 11 and 12 require that the special sheet ribs be configured to guide a post card. In practice for example, this limitation would require the special sheet ribs to be configured to receive special sheets of standard post card dimensions, thus limiting the structure of the special sheet ribs themselves. In addition, the manual sheet supply unit and aligning rollers would be similarly configured. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph rejection of claims 11-12.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 3-4, 8-9 and 11-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Publication No. 7-76438 (“Japan ‘438”).

In response, without agreeing or acquiescing to the rejection, Applicants amend claims 4 and 9. Applicants respectfully submit that the above amended claims are allowable for at least the following reasons.

The claims contain the recitation of features that are not present in the device of Japan ‘438. Newly amended independent claims 4 and 9 recite a sheet guide having special sheet ribs, “wherein the sheet guide further has a pressing member between the special sheet ribs that prevents the bending of the central portion of the ordinary sheet by pressing the back of the central portion of the ordinary sheet with elastic force, and descends by an empty weight of the special sheet when the special sheet is inserted between the special sheet ribs.” As shown in Fig. 3 of the specification, the pressing member of this embodiment of the present invention is attached to the sheet guide 13 by a mounting portion 20a. Thus, the claimed invention is directed to a sheet guide having both special sheet ribs and a pressing member attached to the sheet guide. The pressing member prevents the bending of the central portion of the ordinary sheet by pressing the back of the central portion of the ordinary sheet with elastic force. In addition, the pressing member is configured to descend when the special sheet is inserted between the special sheet ribs.

In the Office Action, the Examiner asserts that “the sheet guide (30) further has a pressing member (50) between the special sheet ribs.” Instead, Japan ‘438 teaches the use of two guide structures positioned opposite one another. The first guide structure is a flank guide plate 30 having a plurality of ribs. The second guide structure is a separate guide plate 45 having an elastic body 50 projecting from the guide plate 45. Accordingly, Japan ‘438 teaches the use of two guide plates, (1) a flank guide plate 30 having ribs and (2) a separate guide plate 45 having an elastic body. (See Figure 4.) As shown in Figure 4, the two distinct guide plates are positioned opposite each other so that a form P moves between the guide plates. Further, Japanese ‘438 discloses a structure in which the side guide plates provided with the ribs prevent the skewing of standard-size sheets. However, the side guide plates are

not configured to prevent skewing when special sheets such as postcards, etc. which are larger in mass and relatively smaller in size than standard-size sheets. Moreover, the Japan '438 reference teaches that the elastic body 50 presses the form P into the flank guide plate 30 ribs. This is shown, for example, in figures 4 and 6.

Thus, Japan '438 fails to teach or disclose a sheet guide having special sheet ribs and a pressing member "between the special sheet ribs that prevents the bending of the central portion of the ordinary sheet by pressing the back of the central portion of the ordinary sheet with elastic force, and descends by an empty weight of the special sheet when the special sheet is inserted between the special sheet ribs" as claimed in claims 4 and 9.

The dependent claims 3, 5, 8 and 10-12 depend from one of the independent claims 4 and 9 and are patentable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 3-5 and 8-12 are not anticipated by Japanese Publication No. 7-76438 and are therefore allowable. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn and claims 3-5 and 8-10 be allowed.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 5 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Publication No. 7-76438 and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,102,393 ("Kida et al.>").

In response, without agreeing or acquiescing to the rejection, Applicants amend claims 4 and 9. As stated above, Japan '438 does not disclose, teach or suggest all the features of independent claims 4 and 9. Further, Kida et al. fail to cure these deficiencies.

For example, Kida et al. does not disclose a sheet guide having special sheet ribs wherein the sheet guide further has a pressing member between the special sheet ribs. Claims 5 and 10 depend from one of independent claims 4 and 9 as amended and are patentable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 3-5 and 8-12 are allowable and respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

New Claim:

New method claim 13 is being added, whereby this claim is also believed to patentably distinguish over the cited art of record.

Conclusion

Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicants hereby petition for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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